

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
HOLYOKE**

**INFORMANT: EVELYN FACHINI
INTERVIEWER: CHRISTINE H. BAILEY
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**I = CHRISTINE H. BAILEY
F = EVELYN FACHINI**

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I: We're now talking with Evelyn [pauses] (F: Fachini) Fachini, who's a friend of Alice Coady, (F: Um hm) and they've come together to the Folk Life Festival here, and Evelyn's going to tell us a little bit about her working life. Uh, Evelyn.

F: Oh, I worked at General Cable in [Pownal] Vermont. That's wires. (I: Uh huh) I worked on wires. Where they make the plugs, they make the wire. And I worked on ever-, about every job in there. Plus molding and making the plugs. Down to the trimming, of the wire. Stripping (- -)

I: When did you go to work there?

F: (- -) and all this. In sixty-eight. I worked there from sixty-eight to seventy-four.

I: And (F: And then) how old were you when you went to work?

F: Thirty-seven.

I: So you didn't go to work until later in life?

F: No. (I: Uh huh) No. I got married, I was married when I was seventeen so, (F: I see) and I had seven kids so (I: Oh boy) stayed home and (I: Uh huh) took care of them.

I: What background is it, ethnic background are you?

F: Irish. (I: Irish, uh huh) Yup. And then I, well I worked from, from sixty-eight to seventy-four, General Cable. And I lost my husband in seventy-three, so I had to quit my job in seventy-four to stay home with, with the kids. I went back to work for Hunter Outdoor Products,

I think, in seventy-five. I stayed out of work I think two year, year and a half. I worked for Hunter Outdoor Products where they make the tents. And I was what they were called a cutter. (I: Uh huh) You cut with scissors (I: Um hm) the cloth, the tent, material I had to cut with scissors until the people from New York came and saw us women cutting with scissors that we did for eight hours a day, was cut with scissors. (I: Mm) So they decided they had to make another way for us to cut the material. (I: Um hm) Which they did. They come up with a little wheel. It was electric. We hold the cloth with your two hands and push it through the wheel, and then cut it. Which made that job a lot easier. You could cut more out, get more out a day. (I: Um hm) And then when Hunter's went out of business I went to work like Alice for [Exdial]. I was the gluer. I cleaned the tents. We cleaned the tents. Scraped the glue. Cleaned them all up. We were at the tail end of finishing depar-, the finishing end of the tents and everything. And then I got transferred downstairs where we went, went down to where they make the zippers. We had to put the zippers on the cloth. Glue them, and make those. And I was there until they went out. Uh in 1981 I believe they went out, eighty-two, somewhere around there. So then I was out of work. Well then eighty-three I was put out of work completely, so (I: Hm) I have not worked, been able to work.

I: Was there a reason? Or y-, health? Health reason?

F: Yes. Health reasons, (I: I see) yes. (I: I see) So. I haven't been, not able to work, (I: Uh huh) now. (I: Uh huh) So.

I: How, what was your attitude towards work when you were there?

F: Oh I loved it!

I: Did you li-, you liked it?

F: Yeah I liked it. (I: Uh huh) I liked working. (I: Wha-wh-) I liked the jobs I had you know.

I: Do you remember [both talk] what you liked about it?

F: All of it. (I: Uh huh) Just, in, all, in general, the, the cleaning. Cleaning the tents with the, [pauses] what was that stuff they used clea-, oh [Tylenol]. (I: Uh huh) Was the clean. Except for that stuff and that stuff was rough on the hands. It could be if you were allergic to it, (I: Huh) which some of the people were, I mean it was rough, but it didn't, it didn't bother mine. (I: Hm) And the glue, the glue smelled terrible. [chuckles] But I liked it, I liked the job. [interviewer chuckles] Then we cleaned, we used um putty knives (I: Uh huh) to scrape the glue, the old glue off the tents after they glue it. We get it, we got to clean them, (I: Hm) so we had to wash them all down with the [Tylenol], and used the putty knife to scrape the old glue off round the seams of the tent you know, the edges and that. And they had to be done right. (I: Hm)

I: So [both talk] (F: So, and then if there was (- -)) did you like, you like that, do you l-, did you have friends that worked with you and you (F: Oh!) had a laugh, is that what it was? [Someone else laughs in background] (F: Yeh; huh?)

I: Is that what it was? (F: What?) You had friends who worked with you and you'd have a laugh (F: Oh yes) during the, while you were doing your work?

F: Yeah, we had the friends, well I had, my daughter was working with me, (I: Uh huh) in one, one of the jobs you know, cleaning the tents. (I: Uh huh) You know we worked together. We worked together when, when we got transferred, too. Downstairs, we went down-, Betty (- -) [someone talks in background] No. [someone talks again] They were married, yes, we are. (I: Oh, oh, I see) We're mother-in-laws. (I: that's nice) [responds to person in background] No, they were married then. That's when I went, that's when I rode to work with Betty and Eddie. [person in background says "Oh"]

I: With having seven children when your husband died and you went back to work, how, who took care of the children?

F: The older ones. (I: The older ones did) The older one that was home took care of [everyone else]. They were in school, so I worked school hours and I was home at (I: Uh huh) three-thirty by the time they got, all got home (I: I see) from school. (I: I see) So that worked out good. (I: Uh huh)

I: So you would schedule your working life according to (- -)

F: Well that's what I worked, days, so I could (I: You worked days) be home at night (I: So you could be home) Yeah.

I: And then when you got home who took, who made the dinner?

F: I did. (I: So you'd do, make the dinner) Most of the time. Yeah.

I: And who put the kids to bed?

F: Yep. (I: And put the kids to bed?) Oh yeah. Got to make sure (I: And they, they (- -)) they get in bed so they can get up for school next day. [chuckles] (I: Right)

I: And then wha-, when they were all in bed what would you do then?

F: I watched TV. (I: Watch TV; relax a bit) Relax. (I: Yeah, yeah) Watch the TV. (I: So I want (- -)) You go to bed early sometimes. Sometimes I stayed up. (I: Mm, mm)

I: Wh-, while you were working did they introduce like they did with Alice any uh computers or any advanced technology into that?

F: No. No, I was (- -)

I: Just tried to change the scissors, the way you use the scissors?

F: Yeah, they changed the scissors, yeah. Yeah and our cutting (I: But no computers) and that uh. No, no computers.

I: Okay, I want to thank you for sharing that with us and uh (F: You're welcome) hope that you'll come to see (- -)

[end of interview]

[end of side one]